



NEWS RELEASE

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NOTE: PHOTOS AVAILABLE AT <http://milkeneducatorawards.org/newsroom/photos/view/403/4776>
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KEARNEY HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER RECEIVES NATIONAL EDUCATOR AWARD

Kevin Witte, a Kearney High School social studies teacher, received a national educator award today and \$25,000 during a surprise presentation at his school.

Witte received the 2013 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award and an unrestricted \$25,000 award.

Witte was surprised at an all-school assembly by Gov. Dave Heineman, First Lady Sally Ganem, Deputy Education Commissioner Scott Swisher and Jane Foley, senior vice president of the Milken Family Foundation. Special guests Mayor Stan Clouse, State Board of Education member Molly O'Holleran and Kearney Public Schools Superintendent Brian Maher attended the event. Ken Rahjes, who represents Congressman Adrian Smith, also will attend the event.

Kearney High School Principal Jay Dostal said Witte is an "outstanding educator who models research-based instructional practices in his classroom on a daily basis.

"Mr. Witte has demonstrated uncommon, celebrated professionalism during his tenure," Dostal wrote, noting that Witte's classroom activities are varied and student centered. "Student presentations and student-led discussions are a regular staple of Kevin's instruction and these are excellent ways of developing students' communicative and logical reasoning skills."

Witte has traveled abroad multiple times and, with each experience, he brought back information that makes his classroom more enriching, Dostal wrote. Witte recently was recognized nationally by being selected to participate in an expedition to the Arctic Circle.

Dostal also credited Witte for developing a successful new imaginative course called *International Wealth and Poverty*. "It takes outstanding professionalism and content knowledge to formulate new curricula, and Mr. Witte possesses these qualities in abundance.

"His knowledge of social sciences is second to none ...," Dostal wrote, noting that Witte helped rewrite the state's social studies standards.

Witte received his Bachelor's Degree from Doane College; his Master's Degree from the University of Nebraska at Kearney; and, has taught at Kearney High School for 12 years.

The Milken Family Foundation has been recognizing teachers across the country since 1987. The program provides public recognition and financial rewards to elementary and secondary school teachers, principals and other educational professionals to attract, retain and motivate talented people. Witte and others from across the country will participate in the Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference.

This year up to 40 outstanding educators across the nation will be named 2013 Milken Educator Award recipients. The Milken Family Foundation provides public recognition and an unrestricted financial award of \$25,000 to teachers, principals and other education professionals who are furthering excellence in education. The selection criteria include:

- Exceptional educational talent as evidenced by effective instructional practices and student learning results in the classroom and school;
- Exemplary educational accomplishments beyond the classroom that provide models of excellence for the profession;
- Individuals whose contributions to education are largely unheralded yet worthy of the spotlight;
- Early- to mid-career educators who offer strong long-range potential for professional and policy leadership; and
- Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community.

The Milken Family Foundation has provided more than \$64 million to fund the Milken Educator Awards since its inception and has recognized nearly 2,600 educators, including the new recipients.

For more information about the award, visit www.mff.org.